

PEOPLE & THINGS

By ATTICUS

THERE is general satisfaction in Fleet Street and Whitehall that the Prime Minister has appointed Mr. T. Fife Clark to his personal staff in Downing Street as his adviser on public relations.

Sir Anthony Eden has acquired the most experienced expert on public relations and the Press in Government service. Mr. Fife Clark is not only a practical journalist, with several years in the Parliamentary Lobby as a political journalist behind him, but was Press Officer at No. 10 Downing Street for three years under Sir Winston Churchill and later the Government's public relations adviser. He is also an experienced Civil Servant and has recently been doubling his Westminster duties with his post as chief of the Central Office of Information, where he succeeded Sir Robert Fraser last October.

Immediately before and during the General Election there were persistent rumours that the Prime Minister would recruit a "big figure" from Fleet Street to advise him on public relations, and the former editor of a national daily was widely mentioned by the gossips, but Sir Anthony has now ended this speculation. Mr. Fife Clark is one of the very few who could satisfy the exacting standards not only of Political Correspondents, newspaper offices and the great body of foreign journalists in London, but also of the higher ranks in Whitehall.

The Great Pierrot

NOBODY would have expected Noel Coward to get the hard-bitten gamblers of Las Vegas rolling in the aisles with "Don't Put Your Daughter on the Stage, Mrs. Worthington" and "Mad Dogs and Englishmen"; but that, against a painted backdrop of the Houses of Parliament, is just what he achieved last month.

In America, nothing succeeds like success, and majestic offers are piling down on him from Broadway and the big television and radio circuits. So far he has contracted to do only three ninety-minute television "Supershows" (formerly known as "Spectaculars") with Bing Crosby, Mary Martin and Kay Kendall, for C.B.S. The first two will be "Present Laughter" and "Blithe Spirit" and the third has yet to be chosen. The price paid by C.B.S. is said to knock his £12,000 a week at Las Vegas into a cocked hat.

As a dollar-earner for Britain, Noel Coward is rapidly catching up with the one-man record set by Sir Winston Churchill for his Memoirs.

Laurels Restored

THE latest issue of the Soviet literary journal "Novy Mir" (New World) to arrive in this country contains selections from the writings of Ivan Bunin, who died in France in 1953 at the age of eighty-three. This is surprising, and may have wider significance than appears at first sight, since Bunin was a bitter opponent of the Bolsheviks, from whom he escaped in 1919, after some experience of Soviet gaols.

Hitherto, such widely-read Soviet magazines have not mentioned "opponents of the regime, dead or alive, except to vituperate them, and have never published their work. Last December, however, at the Congress of Soviet Writers in Moscow, one bold speaker said it was a disgrace that so fine a writer should be kept from the reading public on political grounds.

"Novy Mir," in a remarkably mild editorial note, points out that Bunin did not understand, or accept the Revolution and that his political writings "are not worth

of his pen" but adds that a copious selection from his sixty years' work will soon be published in the Soviet Union.

Ben Shahn

THE new gifts and loans to the Tate Gallery which were announced last week reminded me that our leading galleries are still without any major work by Ben Shahn, generally considered the



best living American painter—although, oddly enough, the Penguin "Modern Painters" volume on Shahn is an exemplary short study.

Shahn is of Russian extraction. Like many who provoke apoplexy in others, he is a modest, genial family man, and lives in Roosevelt, a small New Jersey settlement. Although he paints steadily each day he rarely finishes more than half a dozen pictures each year, and these are immediately bought by the leading American galleries, who can easily outbid our own impoverished curators.

In default of an outright purchase, the best alternative would be a European exhibition of Shahn's work sponsored by some American Foundation. Those who saw the pictures which he contributed to last year's Biennale in Venice will remember how vivid was their effect.

A Great Race

TWO of the most remarkable horses in the recent history of American racing will meet next month in a great match race. They are three-year-olds: Mr. Rex Ellsworth's red chestnut Swaps, from California, and Mr. William Woodward's bay colt Nashua, from New York, and they both have sensational records. The race, whose terms have been agreed between the two owners, will take place at Washington Park, Chicago, on August 21, over the Kentucky Derby distance of 1½ miles. There will be a \$100,000 purse, winner-take-all—and a gold cup for the victor.

Two of America's top jockeys, Willy Shoemaker and Eddie Arcaro, will ride Swaps and Nashua respectively.

The race will not only determine the unofficial champion three-year-old, it will also decide whether the "horse of the year" comes from the East coast or the West, and it is this aspect which may well make this challenge into the heaviest backed horse-race in history.

Smoked Salmon

IF asked what is the greatest British table delicacy, most people would probably say smoked salmon. There is certainly no doubt that the Scottish-cured smoked salmon is the finest in the world. So I thought I would inquire into the mystique of the smoked salmon industry.

Mr. Joe Barnett, one of the partners in a leading firm of curers, says that his eighty-year-old family business is now selling about fifty per cent more smoked salmon than in 1939, and he

estimates that about 1½ million pounds of smoked salmon are consumed in this country every year. Since, during the process of trimming before smoking, and again in preparation for the market, about one half of the salmon's weight is lost, approximately three million pounds of salmon are smoked every year.

Secret Lore

ONE of the reasons why smoked salmon is so expensive is that the elaborate process of curing includes washing, salting, drying and smoking over oak sawdust in large gas ovens. Mr. Barnett hinted darkly that there are also secret tricks of the trade; but each firm jealously guards its own mystery.

Joe Barnett says that the commonest error about smoked salmon is that it will keep for a long time without spoiling. Anglers who send their salmon privately to Barnett's for smoking seem to think they can go on eating the result over several weeks. In fact and if not kept in a refrigerator smoked salmon may become un-eatable in the twenty-four hours of a summer's day.